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Conference Abstract

A Rapid Method for an Initial Registration of a Large Entomology Collection

Peter Lillywhite ‡

‡ Museums Victoria, Melbourne, Australia

Corresponding author: Peter Lillywhite (plwhite@museum.vic.gov.au)

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Abstract

One of the key goals in museums is to register their collections. Ideally to register to a database everything known about each object. In natural history a typical dataset would include identification, date of collection, collector, location of collection, perhaps date of donation, identification history and name and date of whoever made the identification(s). The data may then be enhanced with things such as geolocation, altitude, biography, bibliography etc. This data is then available for researchers, can be uploaded to data aggregation sites and can be used to build maps etc. However, when faced with this enormous task many of us have to admit, not in my lifetime.

We sometimes overlook that it is just as important for a catalogue to simply allow us to know what we have and where it is, as it is to record all of the details about each and every one these items. Obviously fully registering each specimen does both but time may mean that we won't have that catalogue for many years, decades or more even. This quick method provides no individual detail about the specimens but does record how many of each species (or lowest taxonomic group where this is unknown) there are and where in the collection they are located.

Initial estimates suggest that this method can be up to 30 times quicker than full registration. It is being done in tandem with the more comprehensive registration process. Eventually the full registration program will catch up to the rapid program and items

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registered only by species and physical location will be re-registered fully and the old registration number retired.

Keywords

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Presenting author

Peter Lillywhite

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